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THE CANADIAN MILITIA:

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH.

A Lecture delivered to the Young Men's Association of St. Paul's Church, Montreal, on 8th March, 1886.

BY

LIEUT.-COL. W. R. OSWALD,

Commanding Brigade Montreal Garrison Artillery.

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THE CANADIAN MILITIA.

An Historical Sketch of their Services to the State.

THE WARS OF 1759-'76 AND 1812.

The Fenian Invasions and the Recent Troubles in the Northwest.

The following is a full report of a lecture delivered by Lieut.-Col. Oswald, M.G.A., in St. Paul's Church lecture room, Montreal, at the request of the Young Men's association of that church, on Monday evening, the 8th March, 1886. The chair was occupied by Mr. R. A. Ramsay, president of the association. Col. Oswald having been introduced by the Chairman, said:—

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, and, I was going to say, comrades—let me say comrades of the church—I bring before your notice to-night no great story of the soldier's glory; I cannot sing, as old Virgil did, of mighty deeds of arms and of men; I cannot, with Macaulay, weave into heroic measure "lays of the brave days of old;" neither can I rouse your Scottish blood into enthusiasm with stories such as bewitched our childhood, of the desperate valor of Wallace and of Bruce, or gladden the English heart by recounting great battles like Trafalgar and Waterloo. I can but try to portray to you in unskilled language some of the endeavors of your forefathers, and of your brothers of the present day, to keep intact and safe from internal trouble or foreign invasion the great inheritance of this Dominion. And yet, was there ever nation born into this world under a fiercer or more glorious struggle than that which dyed with blood the Plains of Abraham on the 13th of September, 1759, when in the midst of heroism and of death the "fleur de lis" of France gave place on the rocky Citadel of Quebec to the "ensign" of Great Britain? To most of you the story of this great achievement is well known, but inasmuch as from it sprang the British Canada of to-day, and that in it I find the

FIRST RECORD OF AN ENGLISH VOLUNTEER

in Canada, a slight reference to it now may not be amiss and to its hero—General Wolfe. In the assault Wolfe himself led the way at the head of the Louisburgh Grenadiers. Then over the fields arose the British cheer, mixed with the fierce yell of the Highland slogan. The clansmen drew their swords, keen and swift as bloodhounds. A shot shattered Wolfe's wrist; he muffled his handkerchief about it and kept on. Another shot struck him, and he still advanced. When a third lodged in his breast, he staggered and sat on the ground. Lieut. Brown, of the Grenadiers, one Henderson, a *volunteer*, and a private soldier, aided by an officer of artillery, who ran to join them, carried him in their arms to the rear. He begged them to lay him down; they did so, and asked if he would have a surgeon. "There's no need," he answered, "its all over with me." A moment after one of them cried out: "They run! See how they run!" "Who run?" Wolfe demanded, like a man roused from sleep. "The enemy, sir. Egad, they give

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way everywhere." "Go one of you to Col. Burton," returned the dying man. "Tell him to march Webb's regiment down to Charles river to cut off their retreat from the bridge." Then, turning on his side, he murmured, "Now, God be praised, I will die in peace!" And in a few minutes his gallant soul had fled. For his country Wolfe died, as did his worthy opponent, Montcalm, one of the bravest of the brave sons of France. Measured by the numbers engaged the battle of Quebec was but a heavy skirmish; measured by results it was one of the greatest battles of the world. From this decisive victory and from the graves of those two heroes what marvellous results have sprung! Under the monument to Montcalm and his gallant followers, lies buried the supremacy of France in the new world, and from the resting place of Wolfe has grown and flourished the sturdy Anglo-Saxon race spreading, like one of Britain's stately oaks, its mighty branches over an entire continent, from wave to farthest wave, from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean.

AFTER THE CONQUEST,

commenced, as a matter of course, the reorganization of the government of the "colony," as it was styled in the documents of the day. Through the kindness and courtesy of an old Montreal friend, well known to many of you, Mr. Douglas Brymner, now keeper of the archives of the Dominion in the Parliament buildings, Ottawa, I find the earliest records of the Canadian militia, *i.e.*, of the *British* militia. The first entry is in the year following the conquest. On the 19th day of September, 1760, Governor Amherst (afterwards Lord Amherst) writes to Colonel Haldimand to the effect that the militia of Montreal, under the old regime, should meet on a certain day and give in their arms, after which they should take the oath of allegiance to the British crown, when their arms would be returned to them or placed in an armory. And so on, from time to time, we see mention made of the militia. On the 25th March, 1764, Col. Haldimand writes to General Gage with reference to the difficulty of obtaining the necessary militia force, but that he had secured a certain number, having given the command to M. de Montizambert, the ancestor of one of our best soldiers and most efficient artillery men to-day, Lieut.-Col. C. E. Montizambert, commandant of the Citadel at Quebec, and as his lieutenants one M. de Richeville, also of the colony, and one Mr. Smith, who has always been employed in the militia. I suppose there has always been some one of the name of "Smith" in the militia from that day to this. Then, on 4th April, 1771, Quartermaster-General Robertson writes to Colonel Haldimand from New York as to the

RAISING OF TWO REGIMENTS

in Canada, to be officered by young gentlemen of family in Canada, in order to show that the *noblesse* there may be employed to more advantage in ours than in the French service I also find a curious item in one of these letters complaining that the captains of the militia are very much troubled by "bad lawyers." I leave it to your experience to say whether this race has become extinct or not. Let us hope that it has. As it is impossible for me here to enter into a history of the struggles of the earliest colonists and their wars, principally with the Indians, I cannot do better than refer you to those delightful works of Parkman. Talk of novel reading for recreation and rest to the mind; there can be nothing more exciting and interesting than those true historic stories. Because we are what is called a "Colony" and a comparatively new country, because we have no ancient ivy-crowned and castellated ruins, we are apt to imagine we have no history, *i. e.* no Canadian history. Why, the very ground we walk on, the city we live in, the country round about us; its rocks, its rivers, its graceful elms and lovely scenery, all could tell a wondrous story of the desperate fights and struggles engaged in here, of the suffering of delicate women, pious nuns, devoted and self-sacrificing priests and dauntless soldiers. From the founding of the little pallisaded town of Montreal by Maisonneuve in 1642 as a mission colony, under the protection of the Holy Virgin, as the records have it, and for many years afterwards under both the French and English regime, Indian wars and attacks were of constant occurrence. Probably on the very ground on which this church is built the fiendish war whoop of the Hurons and the Iroquois frequently resounded, carrying fear and death to the hearts of many a brave pioneer, with the horrid savage accompaniments of torture, scalping and burning to death of the prisoners. Those two old Martello like towers at the Priest's farm, familiar to all of us, formed part of the fortifications of an outlying post built chiefly for the protection of the

converted Iroquois Indians by the Sulpitian fathers at a very early date. Beyond these sanguinary and horrible contests there is nothing bearing specially upon the subject of these remarks until the years 1775 to '76. From the commencement to the end of the American war of independence—the declaration of independence by our neighbors was, as you all know, made in 1776 and the preliminaries of peace signed in 1783-4. During this war we constantly find reference to the Canadian militia, particularly of their gallant conduct in

THE DEFENCE OF QUEBEC,

when in December, 1775, it was assaulted by the Americans under Gen Montgomery, during which attack he met his death, as anyone who has seen the placard on the rock at Quebec can testify to. The Americans set up scaling ladders, but the fire kept up by the Canadians was so deadly that the assailants, driven back, were fain to take shelter in the houses. Then an intrepid militiaman—named Charland—advanced amid a shower of bullets, seized the ladders and drew them inside the barricades. The Canadians were soon relieved, and the Americans were slowly driven off from Quebec and its environs, and eventually from the frontier of Canada, the struggle being continued, says Garneau, the historian, rather between antagonistic militias than between the royalists and the troops of the Congress in the Canadian arena. When the Legislative chambers opened in Quebec in 1793, we find the Governor, Lord Dorchester, calling the attention of that body to the organization or reorganization of the militia. Two battalions were afterwards raised, and eventually disbanded, but apparently the force was maintained in some shape. We find frequent references to it, as, for example, of orders being sent to captains of militia to arrest all such persons as should endeavor to break the King's peace. If captains of the militia of the present day were permitted this amusement, there would be some lively times and broken heads occasionally. Then when trouble commenced to brew between Great Britain and the United States an unfounded rumor was set on foot that the mere appearance of the American flag amongst the Canadian militia would cause them to rise in a body and join the American Confederation. The Americans, who mooted this in order to put an end to European domination in all parts of this continent, eagerly propogated the report through their numerous journals. Accordingly in the summer of 1807 a grand military demonstration was made, a fifth part of the colonial militia being called out and were ordered to be ready to march at the first signal. The ballotting for men and their training afterwards was cheerfully and briskly carried on to a degree which belied the insinuations thrown out against the loyalty of the Canadians. All, however, was comparatively quiet until the

WAR BROKE OUT IN 1812.

And now I come to a sad event, one which we must all feel keenly, namely, the sudden death on Friday last of Colonel Dyde. To myself personally, and particularly in connection with this lecture, the occurrence is particularly distressing. From the moment he knew of my intention to deliver a lecture on the Canadian militia, he took the greatest interest in the matter, and placed at my disposal his reminiscences of the war of 1812. I shall not alter a word of what I had written before his death, but read to you now what I wrote then, and it is as follows :—

I am sure you will heartily agree with me when I tell you that I am going to give you what must be a treat to all of us, viz.: An account of the cause of this war, which occurred seventy-six years ago, and some of the principal incidents in it as far as Canada was affected, given to me personally and in writing only the other day by one, who, if not actually a partaker, was at all events an onlooker at that momentous time, and who is still erect, hale and hearty, at the great age of 89, Colonel Dyde, C.M.G., A D.C. to the Queen, the father of the Canadian militia of to-day. On the 18th of June, 1812, the United States declared war against Great Britain. There was a deep feeling of animosity existing between the two nations owing to various causes. Great Britain was at war with France, and the sympathy of the United States was altogether in favor of the latter in granting facilities and protection to the cruisers of that nation in their harbors, and also in laying embargos on English shipping, resulting in non-intercourse with Great Britain in 1812. At this time, Great Britain having cleared the seas of the vessels of almost every nation, the United States had nearly all the carrying trade. On the other side Great Britain had asserted the right of search, that is the power to overhaul merchantmen on the high seas, and impress any British seamen

who might be on board, and also to claim from American men-of-war any deserters from British cruisers. This led to several sanguinary hand to hand engagements, notably those between H.M.S. Leopard, 2-decker, and the American frigate Chesapeake, and another between the U.S. frigate President, 44 guns, and the British sloop-of-war Little Belt, 18 guns. The account given of these engagements is very interesting, but we must pass on to matter more properly belonging to the subject of these remarks: —The inevitable result of this state of things was that war was declared, as I have said, on the 18th June, 1812.

MONTREAL DURING THE WAR OF 1812.

It caused much excitement and some anxiety. Montreal then contained about 12,000 inhabitants, nearly two-thirds French Canadians, the next Scotch and then English, but very few Irish. The Irish immigration did not take place to any extent till a long time after, when they came by thousands for many years. The fortifications had in a great measure fallen into ruins, been levelled or removed, to enable the town to expand. but the stone walls and gates remained in some parts, and the citadel was still intact where Dalhousie square now is It was a hill of considerable height, with guns mounted and the artillery barracks on the top. It commanded the river and the town. After the war it was razed and now forms a large portion of the Champ de Mars. The loyalty of the people, without distinction of race or creed, could not be surpassed, much to the disappointment of the Yankees. An artillery corps, a troop of cavalry and four militia battalions were immediately organized, armed and equipped for service. All males from eighteen to sixty were accepted, or rather taken as eligible, but many younger and older men were disappointed at not being taken. All were constantly on the alert and in high spirits. The first demonstration that occurred was on the arrival of General Hull and his force; he had crossed the frontier at Detroit, issued proclamations inviting the Canadians to join his standred. After several reverses he was driven back and finally captured by the gallant and heroic Brock, who had been entrusted with the defence of the Upper Province, where all the fighting took place the first year of the war. On Sunday evening, the beginning of September, the American prisoners, accompanied by their general in a carriage, with a British officer of rank, followed by another with British and American staff officers, were escorted into town by detachments from the 8th King's Regiment and the Montreal Militia, headed by the band of the King's. The gratification of the spectators was intense; it being late, the streets through which the line of march passed were illuminated. The General was received at the Government house by the governor, His Excellency Sir George Prevost, and the officers, twenty-five in number, were quartered at Holmes' hotel. The prisoners left for Quebec under a militia guard on the 8th September. Although Montreal was not exposed to any direct attack for some time, still there were constant alarms of flying columns coming in by the way of Lake Champlain, or down the St. Lawrence from Ogdensburgh to "gobble" up Montreal. On the 19th November, at midnight,

THE DRUMS BEAT TO ARMS

and the whole force were ordered to meet the enemy in the direction of Lachine, but finding none, after some days the brigade returned. It was not until the autumn of 1813 that any fighting of consequence took place in Lower Canada. General Wilkinson had assumed command of the Northern army of the United States, and a plan was formed to unite his forces for a grand attack upon Montreal and Quebec by two strong divisions, one commanded by General Hampton, by the way of Lake Champlain, and the other by himself, descending the St. Lawrence from Sackett's harbor, with the intention of forming a junction at some place near Montreal. After much manœuvring, Hampton was signally defeated by the

ABLE AND GALLANT DE SALABERRY,

with his regiment, the Voltigeurs, and some militia at Chateauguay, and Wilkinson, on his way down the St. Lawrence, was brought to bay and compelled to land at Chrysler's farm by the British force, which followed him from Kingston, and was also defeated, after which he made the best of his way back to the States. At the battle of Chrysler's farm the Glengarry Light Infantry distinguished itself, rivaling in gallantry His Majesty's regular troops. After Hampton's defeat at Chateauguay, and refusing to comply with Wilkinson's orders, he was dismissed the service in disgrace.

Wilkinson remained quiet during the winter, when he prepared again for an advance on Montreal, crossed the Canadian border and pressed on towards La Colle on the 30th March, 1814. After a fierce attack on the stone mill and block house, defended by His Majesty's 13th and militia, the American force being three or four to one, he was obliged to withdraw, having lost 13 killed and 128 wounded. The British loss was eleven killed and forty-four wounded and missing.

In the spring of 1814 the seige and surrender of Paris took place. Wellington's victory over Sault at Toulouse, and the unconditional abdication of Napoleon was a great relief to Great Britain, for the war with France had been long and exhaustive. These events enabled the war with the United States to be carried on more vigorously, and a division of Wellington's victorious army left France for Canada without delay. On arrival at Montreal a brigade marched at once for the Upper province, and one, under Sir George Prevost, formed the chief part of an expedition to attack Plattsburg, and to act as occasion required. Owing to the incompetency of the commander these fine troops came back discomfited, and great dissatisfaction was felt by all. Sir George, in *quasi* disgrace, was soon after ordered home, but died on the passage. From this time until the declaration of peace, December 24, 1814, Montreal was not again menaced, it being always garrisoned by a strong force of regulars and active militia. When peace was proclaimed the whole militia force was mustered, the arms, equipments, etc., returned into the armories, and the officers and men relieved from further service; and from that time there was no regular militia force in the country till the troubles of 1837. There was, indeed, a troop of cavalry and a company of rifles in Montreal, turning out occasionally, and the sedentary militia, without arms or uniforms, were supposed to muster once a year for roll call, which was very perfunctorily carried out. Several regular regiments were sent home as soon as possible, Bonaparte having made his escape from Elba, and it is believed that some were in time for Waterloo." Thus does the veteran who witnessed these stormy times, before you and I, my friends, were thought of, describe them to us to-day in clear and racy language. May he live many a long day yet to enjoy the honor and respect we all feel for him; as well as wear —worthily as he does—the honors bestowed on him for services to his country by his Queen.

Such were my remarks concerning him when in life; dead, I honor and revere his memory. The last I saw of the gallant old soldier was on Thursday, when he called at my office with his friend Colonel Hart, to give me an old engraving of Montreal in 1803 to show you to-night. He expressed his intention of being present and seemed to look forward with much interest to the lecture. We shall miss his stately figure and ever warm greeting. He died as he had lived; his long life was spent in upholding the honor of his country; he died vindicating the honor of one who bears his own stainless name.

As we rapidly scan over the pages of our history we find nothing of a sufficiently absorbing interest in connection with Canadian militia matters to call for special remark until we come to the next eventful epoch, viz: what is commonly known as

THE REBELLION OF 1837.

The troubles which led to the rebellion are matters more of civil than of military history. The principal event in the latter connection was undoubtedly the battle of St. Eustache. As probably the parents or near relatives of many of you, and possibly some who are here to-night, were there, we will take this opportunity of doing what old soldiers dearly love, fighting the battle over again. From the Montreal GAZETTE, of December 16, 1837, I take the following extract:—

The troops took up their quarters at St. Martin's during the night of Wednesday, the day on which they left the city, from whence they departed at about seven on Thursday morning, towards St. Eustache, but not in a direct line, for it was understood that the ice on the river in that way was not sufficiently strong to bear the weight of so heavy a body as the artillery and cavalry. A detour was in consequence taken towards St. Rose, where the ice was crossed from Ile Jesus to the main land. The line of march then proceeded upwards along the right bank of the river until the troops approached the village of St. Eustache, making a march from St. Martin about twelve miles, whereas in a direct line it would only consist of about six or seven. The troops were first fired upon by the rebels from the church of St. Eustache, a considerable time before any position had been taken up. On

coming within the proper range two field pieces were planted on the northeast side of the church and began to play upon them in excellent style, while another field piece was sent round in rear of the village and stationed where it commanded a street leading directly to the front door of the same edifice. The three regiments and the cavalry in the meantime made a circuit round the village in rear, and took up positions to intercept the rebels when they should be compelled to abandon their position. The church having at length been set on fire the rebels were seen flying in every direction, not without many of them having been killed and taken prisoners. The nunnery and presbytere, situated on either side of the church, which were occupied by the rebels, were also destroyed, as well as several other houses in the village, particularly those of Scott and Chenier. The loss sustained on either side has not been actually ascertained, but it is reported that eighty of the rebels had been killed and more than 100 taken prisoners. Dr. J. O. Chenier was killed in the yard of the church, and Fereol Peltier and the Commander-in-chief Girod are said to have taken to flight towards St. Benoit immediately after the first fire. On the part of the troops we have no account of any being killed except two men. Mr. A. Gugy, whilst storming the sacristy, was severely but not dangerously wounded in the left shoulder. The blaze arising from the burning houses of St. Eustache was distinctly seen the same night from the rising ground in rear of this city towards the old race course. From a minute survey taken at the time, the number of houses destroyed by the conflagration, exclusive of the church and presbytere, which were reduced to ashes, amounted to about sixty. A wounded prisoner, one Major, from St. Benoit, stated that when the attack was made upon St. Eustache the rebel force at that place amounted to about 1,000 men. It is supposed that nearly 200 of the rebels fell or were suffocated in the flames of the buildings, which had been fired and from which they defended themselves. Upwards of twenty bodies were found in the churchyard and in the garden attached to the nunnery, forty rebels were killed in attempting to make their escape towards the woods. In imitation of General T. S. Brown at St. Charles upon pretence of bringing up reinforcements, the rebel commanders, Girod and Peltier, are said to have made their escape soon after the fire of the troops commenced, but they have not since been heard of, except calling at Inglis' tavern, about four miles from St. Eustache, where they stated that the troops had been completely defeated. These heroes are now supposed to have taken refuge in the woods, but it is probable they will soon be traced out." The regiments engaged were apparently the Royal Artillery, Royal and 83rd regiments and the Montreal Cavalry and Rifle (volunteer) corps. I have given a pretty full account of this engagement for the reasons already given, as also to enable you better to understand the few views of the affair which I am going to try and show you after these remarks are finished. I am indebted to another veteran soldier, Colonel Wily, of the 88th regular regiment in those days, and as you all know for a long time holding important positions on the militia staff, who also is, I am glad to see, with us to-night, for a sketch of the

DIFFERENT ENGAGEMENTS AT THAT TIME,

viz. : The first blow struck in November, at Longueuil, in which the Montreal cavalry were roughly handled. Then the fiasco under Colonel Gore at St. Denis, a few days afterwards, Colonel Wetherall's smashing the rebels at St. Charles where they suffered some loss. But "you cannot make omelettes without breaking eggs," comments the gallant colonel. Later on in 1838-9 there were troubles along the frontier by American sympathizers, two engagements taking place at Lacolle and Odelltown, both repulsed with loss, and in Upper Canada a landing was effected at Prescott under one Hindenlung, a Pole, who was captured and afterwards tried by court martial and shot. That was the way they treated rebels in those days. But we must pass on, although there is much subject matter gleaned from my reading connected with the events of these years that I should have gladly brought before you, inasmuch as, apart from the historical, there is to many of you a

STRONG PERSONAL INTEREST

connected with them. I find the names of McGill, Moffatt, R (Judge) Mackay, Routh, Molson, Geddes, J. G. McKenzie, Hugh Allan, Fletcher, Greenshields, John Grant, Gugy, Esdaile, A. Clark, Meredith (chief justice), and many others—some in our midst to-day, many, the majority, gathered to their fathers—signing a document for a public meeting for Monday, the 3rd July, 1837, for the purpose of giving expression

to their disapproval of certain resolutions adopted at certain public meetings, apparently those disloyal meetings held by Papineau and others. Capital speeches were made and stirring times they must have been. Several of those whom I have mentioned, and many more whom I have not time to mention, but whose names are household words amongst us to-day, were also present at the battles of St. Denis and St. Eustache. Not well—indeed, according to our notions of military equipment nowadays—not fitted out at all for warfare, but with brave hearts and stalwart arms, ready to do and, if need be to die, for the preservation of the peace and safety of their homes and the rights and privileges of their race. From an interesting book called "Trifles from My Porfolio," written by a staff officer, Dr. Henry (a brother-in-law of Mr Charles Geddes), who had seen a great deal of service in the British army, and who took part in the campaign of '37, I quote the following terse sentences from his concluding pages, which, although written almost fifty years ago, give good advice to us to-day :—

"You are a French-Canadian; 'tis well. You are descended from one illustrious nation and adopted by another. It is probable that from strong attachment to your old country, a principle, abstractedly considered, most honorable, and a misconception of the policy of Great Britain, you have been long fondly imagining that you could build up a new France on this continent under the wing of England. Now, my dear fellow, you must disabuse yourself of this gross delusion without delay, totally and irrevocably. The thing is physically and absolutely impossible; and you might as reasonably expect that the dark tribute poured from the St. Maurice into your mighty river would be able to retain its hue, or change the broad current to its own tint, as that you can continue French amidst the great Anglo-Saxon family to which you now belong. You are an Anglo-Canadian. Pardon me, if I say that you, my dear loyal sir, would also do well to get rid of some prejudices and erroneous notions. You are rather too much of a monopolizer of loyalty, and too apt to off nd your fellow-citizens of French origin, classing them indiscriminately and thus unwisely confounding the bad with the good. Now you may be sure that the great majority of them, although they will not come forward as prominently as yourself, which is not in their nature, are still sound at heart and well affected to the Government. There is, no doubt, an active and mischievous portion, reckless and unprincipled, but those who have property and a stake in the country, the commercial classes, the seigneurs, the clergy and eight-tenths of the habitants, making allowance for their peculiar manner, are as loyal as yourself." Very pertinent remarks these seem to me to be. It is true that the population of Canada is to a great extent cosmopolitan, but we should all be at heart Canadians, and join together in working out the destiny of the land we love and live in.

"Whether from England's fields of bloom,
Or Erin's lanes of emerald green;
Whether from Scotland's hills of broom,
Or France's vine-clad capes serene;
United on St. Lawrence brink,
Stand we together man to man,
And all these various titles sink
Into one name, Canadian."

In 1861 what is known as

THE TRENT AFFAIR

occurred, and, says Colonel Wily, there was great excitement. A stimulus was then given to the volunteer movement, bringing it up to its present high standard. On that occasion the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th battalions were raised in Montreal. There had been a company of artillery as it was called, and a cavalry troop in existence for a number of years. The finest dressed, says an old letter, is the Montreal Cavalry corps, which is the admiration of the housemaids and the envy of all the linen-drapers' clerks in town, but a corps which has had a long and honorable record. The history of the different corps connected with this city and province—including the old Voltigeurs and Fencibles—would form abundant material for a lecture of itself, and I hope some of my brother officers may take the matter up and give us the benefit of their researches. Meanwhile, it is impossible to advert to it to-night, much as I should like to do so.

IN 1866,

as an outcome of the civil war in the United States, a large number of the unemployed Irish in that country found their way into the ranks of the Fenian brotherhood, and as an outlet to their feelings or in the hopes of plunder or licking Great Britain via Canada, found their way, to the number of about 800 to 1,000 men tolerably well equipped, across the border line at Fort Erie. They were met by the Queen's Own, the 13th battalion of

Hamilton, and the companies of York Rifles and Caledonian Rifles, 840 all told, all under command of Lt -Col. Booker at Ridgeway on the 2nd June of that year. The advantage in this engagement, judging from Lieut.-Col. Booker's report, was apparently with the enemy, but if so they did not follow it up, and after some fighting in the town of Fort Erie, where gallant conduct was shown by Captain King of the Welland Canal Field Battery, and the few with him, and generally making themselves unpleasant the "filibusterers" sheered off and got back as best they could across the lines, leaving behind a number of prisoners as well as having lost in killed and wounded many more. The worst of this most uncalled-for and ruthless "invasion" was that it cost the lives of some nine or ten fine young men belonging to the Queen's Own regiment, which was ably commanded by a brave and gallant officer, Lieut.-Col. (then Major) Gilmor. The monument to them in Queen's park, Toronto, commemorates their valor. They fell bravely and nobly for their country, and their names inscribed on that monument are enrolled on the scroll of honor. From 1866 to 1870 nothing special occurred, in the beginning of which year the call to arms rang out again on a similar invasion by these marauders. They crossed

OVER THE BORDER UNDER GEN. O'NEIL AT ECCLES' HILL,

and were met and repulsed by the frontier regiments, some Montreal troops under command of Lieut.-Col. Osborne Smith, C.M.G., consisting of a company of the Victoria Rifles under Captain (now Colonel) Crawford, Lieuts. E. B. Greenshields and J. K. Oswald. After a skirmish the Fenian "General" and his men withdrew. From Malone, a town twelve miles across the border and south of Huntingdon, another column invaded our territory and were met some two miles on this side of the line by a force sent out under Col. Bagot, of the 69th Regiment (regulars), the Huntingdon Borderers under Col McEachern, the Hemmingford Rangers, under Col. Rogers, and the Montreal Garrison Artillery under Lieut.-Col. H MacKay, in all about 1,000 to 1,200 strong. On a bright summer day in July we marched from Huntingdon (I was a lieutenant in Capt. Ramsay's battery) and met the enemy, who were entrenched behind barricades made of trees cut down and fences taken from the adjoining fields, thrown across the road for some distance on either side On their left front a flanking party had been thrown out and occupied a clump of trees, from which we were saluted with some sharp volleys. Skirmishers were sent out by Col. Bagot from the Borderers, the 69th and No. 1 Battery Montreal Garrison artillery, the latter being commanded by Capt. Theo. Doucet. After a short fusilade the Fenians thought discretion the better part of valor, and took to their heels and ran. The whole affair did not last over an hour and the casualties, if any, were light, but while it was going on was very enjoyable, the ping-ping of the bullets about one's head giving a pleasant Æolian harp-like sound. Had the enemy been better handled and had the barrels of their Springfield rifles not been of a bright polished steel, which spoiled their aim, the result might have been different. As it was—and I trust my gallant C. O. at that time will forgive me, when I say, so rumor had it, when we went back to camp at Trout river, that on the evening of the affair, the Commandant Col. Bagot and two of his officers came over to the Artillery quarters to discuss the events of the day and the chances of the morrow, with our colonel. After a little stimulating and refreshing beverage had been partaken of there was no doubt in the worthy commandant's mind that *some* men had been killed on both sides. As the contents of the decanters decreased the number of casualties increased until they reached several killed and wounded on our side—loss of the enemy large but unknown. I had always considered Fenians and Fenianism more of a myth than anything else, but I had an opportunity at that time of going to Malone on the day they were taken prisoners while at mass by the United States troops, and I was astonished to see the large number of them, amounting, I should say, to between 2,000 and 3,000 in brilliant green uniforms. Their "generals," Gleeson, Mannix, and others I saw confined in the skating rink at that place, and fine looking soldierly men they were. After remaining ten days or so in camp, and having been inspected and complimented by General Lindsay and Prince Arthur at Huntingdon, we returned home under Colonel Ferrier, who had come out and assumed command as senior officer. We had not suffered much physically, it is true, but we had nevertheless willingly taken our chance and made up our minds to whatever dangers might be in store for us, and many had suffered materially in a pecuniary way.

A number of the men were repaid by being refused employment in their places of work, and they and their wives and children suffered accordingly, thus illustrating the lines written on the walls of Delhi by a British officer :—

" War proclaimed and danger nigh,
God and the soldier is the people's cry ;
When war is over and danger righted,
God is forgotten and the soldier s ighted."

In the beginning of this year (1870) the

FIRST NORTHWEST OR RIEL REBELLION

broke out, causing much trouble and uneasiness in that, in those days, somewhat remote country, and culminating in the cold-blooded murder of Scott before the gate of Fort Garry. Colonel Wolseley was sent up with a force of about 1,000 men, taken from the ranks of some of the best British regiments, the 60th Rifles and others, and two battalions of Canadian militiamen, who volunteered. The expedition was admirably managed throughout ; they had hard work clearing roads, portaging, etc., going up, but not a single life was lost. It forms (says Major Boulton in his new book) the nrst of a series of exploits under the leadership of Colonel (now Viscount) Wolseley which have reflected much credit on his gallantry and administrative ability. He is affectionately regarded and held in high esteem by Canadians, among whom he long resided and who watch his career with the deepest interest and with pride in his success. Neither has he forgotten his old Canadian friends or that it was in Canada that his brilliant career really commenced, in proof of which I may say that a few days after the battle of Batoche Gen. Middleton received the following telegram from Suakim :—" Best congratulations to you and my old gallant comrades of the Canadian militia."—Wolseley. He arrived at Fort Garry on the 24th August, 1870, and Riel only gave up the reins of power a few moments before his arrival, preferring not to remain to render an account of his short but iniquitous reign. You are most of you aware of the events connected with the calling out of the militia at different times, since the Fenian raids until now. On more than one occasion has the country been indebted to its militia force for preserving order in our midst.

POLICE DUTY

is not what the militia ought to be called upon to do, and there is no more disagreeable duty that a soldier can perform ; and yet in order to save rioting and bloodshed the militia of Canada has, notably in this city, frequently responded to the call of the civil authorities to aid in the preservation of the peace. The burial of Guibord, the labor riots in Quebec, the Orange troubles here ; even down to our recent friend—or rather, I should say, enemy—M. Picotte, and the dangers that lurked under and from his unwholesome skin disagreeable as those duties were, they were cheerfully performed by our troops, and the peace has been preserved. The citizens, the merchants, the lovers of peace and prosperity in this good city of Montreal, have to thank the volunteers for more than they may imagine. It is true that at the call of duty sons have to leave their homes, clerks give up the desk for the drill shed, workmen forsake their tools, the pen of the business man himself is not unfrequently laid aside in order to take up the sword, and all this " upsets business," and is therefore unpopular. But all the same, had this not been done, the alternative would have been that the business, the trade, the manufactories, almost even the credit of many of our citizens would have suffered severely on more than one occasion. Therefore, I think that instead of grudging the services of the young men to the militia force, they ought to be encouraged to join it. Physically the drill does them good, and the necessity of learning the first duty of a soldier, obedience, is good training. A good soldier will always be a faithful servant. That our militia force has

GROWN IN PUBLIC FAVOR

and estimation within the last few years is undeniable, for unlike the treatment meted out to those who returned from the frontier in 1870, I am glad to be able to say that the men who came back from the recent Northwest campaign were, as a rule, fairly treated by their employers. I know of comparatively few cases in my own brigade in which situations were lost, and in not a few instances the men's wages were continued while they were away. I trust this excellent spirit may continue, and still increase. And now we come to the last act in the drama of the history of the Canadian army or militia,

THE CAMPAIGN OF LAST YEAR

in the Northwest, which, unlike the unrevealed secrets and possibilities of the 5th scene in a heavy tragedy on the boards of the Academy of Music, we all know already what the finale has been. And inasmuch as that is the case, I shall confine myself to a very few remarks and reminiscences of the campaign and of the comparatively easy part taken in it by the brigade which I have the honor to command. We left Montreal on the 11th May last, 300 strong, about the tallest and strongest and most soldierly-looking man in the regiment being the *chaplain*. A most excellent soldier was spoilt when he was made a minister. It was a fortunate thing for the people of St. Paul's that we were not called on our arrival at Winnipeg to go on immediately to the front, and then if we had got there to be lucky enough to get into action. The chaplain had only a penknife to defend himself or fight with, but he had, I always thought, a great hankering after one of my revolvers. If I had missed one I know that I should either have accused the chaplain of the robbery or a certain colored gentleman, though gold was more in his line than steel. He got my patent leather boots with the spurs for which he took them, but alas for Jumbo, they were only plated brass and not gold, as I have no doubt he has found out from the pawnbroker long ere now. Perhaps some of you thought, as he thought himself, that the first duty of the minister of the church was to his own congregation, and that he need not have come up with us. Well if, as he teaches you to do, you love your neighbor as yourselves, you doubtless love your country and have at least a kindly feelingfor thosewho were willing to saerifice much —home, comfort, means, life itself if necessary—for it. You may think I am exaggerating, but I am not. You would scarcely believe the amount of suffering caused by the prolonged absence from home of the breadwinners of so many families, notwithstanding the good work done by the charitable committees, to whom be all praise and to whom we return most hearty thanks. The men themselves felt anxious about those they had left behind, I know, and were cheered and comforted by the chaplain's kindly words and Christian counsel. He talked to them as a brother and a comrade, preached to them under most impressive circumstances, took hold of their affections by beating them at putting the stone, tossing the caber and pitching into them most unmercifully for swearing! For myself and the officers and men of my brigade, I thank the people of St. Paul's church for giving us our chaplain, and if you lost a little by his short absence you have the satisfaction of knowing that the gain to others was great. Surely it was a Christian duty to look after the spiritual welfare of so many men, and I think the chaplain will agree with me when I say that a finer body of men it would be hard for any city to send out. Their conduct while they were away proved this, and they brought nothing but credit to the good city whose name is borne by the Brigade to which they belong. And talking of chaplains, let me say that

SOME OF THE NOBLEST MARTYRS' BLOOD

has been given to this Northwest Territory. Who can read without a shudder of the fearful tortures suffered by the Jesuit Fathers Brobœuf and Joques and others at the hands of the cannibal Iriquois, or of the foul murders of Fathers Marchand and Fafard in the recent war? Roman Catholics, you will say. Yes, but all the same men who suffered much and sacrificed their lives for the Christianization and civilization of the world. The missionaries of our Protestant church are few and far between in the Northwest. Good men and true they are, and their life is by no means a bed of roses. I happened to meet one at old Crowfoot's Blackfeet reserve—a man of education and culture, and eager in his arduous work of translating the Bible into the Blackfeet tongue, as well as doing good as opportunity offered. In order to show you the sort of persons he had to deal with I will tell you the answers he gave me to two questions I asked him incidentally. He gave us some preserved milk for our coffee. I said, how is it you have no fresh milk with such splendid pasture for a cow? Oh, he said, I had a cow, but it was no use keeping it. The Indians got up too early in the morning for me and milked it, so I killed it. I noticed a nice patch of potatoes growing and congratulated him on it. Yes, he said, they look very well, but I doubt if there are any potatoes really there, because, you see, they (the Indians) come over in the dark and pull away the biggest ones under the ridges and cover the ground over again, so that I never know if I have any potatoes at all until I dig up the stalks in the fall. Parkman tells of a dying Indian,

just baptised, asking anxiously whether, in the realms of bliss to which he was bound, *pies* were to be had comparable to those with which the French regaled him.

OF THE INDIAN CHARACTER

much has been written foolishly and credulously believed. Yet to the eye of rational observation there is nothing unintelligible in him. He is full, it is true, of contradictions. He deems himself the centre of greatness and renown—as old Pie-a-Pot said to us, that his name was the terror of his foes all the world over, from the Far West, mentioning some unintelligible place, to the very furtherest east. Yes; even as far as Winnipeg! Yet, who can help feeling for them? We have taken away their birthright, their hunting grounds, and driven off their buffaloes, upon which they lived. Whatever civilization can do for them now ought to be done. Let us treat them kindly. Let us send to them more soldiers of the church and we will have less need to send more soldiers of the Queen.

THE LATE CAMPAIGN

was by far the most remarkable in Canadian history. Organized at Ottawa by a French-Canadian minister of militia, Sir A. P. Caron, a man of devoted loyalty to the British crown and of great ability—the operations in the field were ably planned and carried out by a British major-general, Sir F. Middleton, to whom too much praise and thanks cannot be given for his thoughtfulness and care for the lives of the citizen soldiers under him. The troops were altogether Canadian militiamen, and I think no one can question that they did their duty well. That they did so, the death roll bears cruel witness to. Never shall I forget that Sunday in Winnipeg when we assisted at the funeral of some of its young citizens, who had fallen in the earlier engagements. The following lines on the death of a gallant young trooper, of Boulton's scouts, are not inappropriate—poor D'Arcy Baker, who was lying severely wounded, on hearing the shots fired at a night alarm, raised himself up, called for his horse and rifle, staggered to the door of the tent, and fell dead from the exhaustion of his efforts:—

"My rifle and my horse!" the soldier cried,
As forth with vigorous step he quietly came;
On his young brow the morning sunlight played,
And life was centered in his active frame.

By winding streams, far o'er the plain we go,
Where dark ravines and woody bluffs appear,
Where'er a swarthy, treacherous Indian foe
May hide to burst upon our flashing rear.

'Tis ours to guard the friends who come behind,
'Tis ours to find and search the dangerous shade;
Perchance our lives we lose, but never mind,
When duty calls, let no man be afraid.

The sulphurous smoke is drifting to the sky,
And horse and rider on the plain are spread;
The ambushed foe in sullen terror fly,
The bold and brave are now amongst the dead.

With shattered heart, the stricken soldier lies,
The fatal wound has almost ceased to bleed;
The dying warrior vainly seeks to rise,
And begs once more his rifle and his steed.

Forever more the youthful limbs are still,
The young, the gallant and impulsive brave
Now rests beside the far off western hill,
And wild flowers blossom by his lonely grave.

This campaign will always be memorable as marking a new era in Canadian history, inasmuch as it has shown that we have the means and the men within our own borders of repelling attacks either from within or from without.

Do not, however, go away with the idea that the success of the campaign was brought about without much personal trouble and sacrifice.

A SOLDIER'S LOT

on active service is not by any means a happy one. I know a commanding officer's is not. He is the only responsible head. If anything goes wrong he alone is blamed, and he consequently has to do his duty without fear or favor, and regardless of the offence it is almost inevitable he must sometimes give to parties outside as well as inside his regiment. First to maintain discipline and then to look after the comfort and welfare of his command are his two most important and sometimes troublesome duties, but which must not be neglected if the efficiency of the regiment is to be maintained. And here I cannot refrain from alluding, with regret, to the most unsoldierly habit indulged in by a few insubordinate members of the militia force—I cannot call them soldiers—of criticizing and decrying, through the medium of the public press, the actions of their superior officers. Such men are a disgrace to the service; and as a rule a man

who will write scurrilous anonymous letters, is not at all scrupulous as to the truth of what he says. The cowardly part of it is that a commanding officer cannot defend himself. It is like striking a man when he is down with his hands and feet tied. The militia act says, and very properly so, that no writing in the public press should be permitted, inasmuch as the regulations provide for every man in the service, no matter what his rank may be, receiving ample justice. Notably since the recent campaign in the Northwest has this pernicious custom been indulged in, and it is a great pity, for it has detracted from the justly deserved praise given on all sides to the good work done there by the militia force. Although the work we were called upon to do in the Northwest was not of a physically arduous nature, yet it was trying enough.

WE HAD GONE A LONG WAY FOR A FIGHT,

and wanted to have one, and it was from no fault of mine, as Colonel Van Straubenzee can tell you, that we didn't succeed. We were, it is true, disappointed in not getting into any of the engagements, but still we were fortunate in having a very important position assigned to us. So, resigning ourselves to fate, we kept watch and ward on the archrebel Riel and his councillors in case there should be any attempt at rescue, as well as serving to keep in check by our presence any rising of the Indians on the reserves a little further north of us on the Qu'Appelle river. As we lay at night, in our blankets, feeling—as one of the men expressed it, every now and then for a "bit of the soft side of the prairie to lie on," with nothing to disturb the silence of the night in that great lone land but the changing of our sentries and the loud shout of the Mounted police patrols close by, as they told off their numbers and finished up their rounds with the reassuring "all's well" —our thoughts would wander from where our hopes and aspirations were, at the front, to the dear ones we had left at home. And, as I know now, but was unaware of then—many an anxious thought and many a weary care were concealed under a calm exterior—not for themselves but for those dependent upon them whom they had left behind. The

SPIRIT OF THE ANGLO-SAXON

is not dead amongst us. Slumbering it may be under the work and cares of every day life, but when occasion calls it will always be found in the future as in the past, that both the men and the women of our race are willing to sacrifice much when duty calls upon them so to do. That spirit has never been wanting in the Canadian militia from its earliest records, as I have endeavored to show until now. How is it to be in the future? that is a question for our younger men to answer; that they will be worthy of their forefathers I have little doubt. There is a sturdy spirit of endurance, manliness and pluck permeating the youth of this country, and while upon them falls the responsibility of maintaining a greater inheritance, I feel very confident that they will be worthy of the trust and be able to maintain, inviolate, this large and important possession of the vast empire of Great Britain.

At the close of the lecture a hearty vote of thanks was conveyed to the lecturer.

A number of views were then shown by Mr. Prowse's excellent hydrogen light, comprising pictures of Montcalm and his army, General Wolfe, the well known and honored figure of Colonel Dyde, whom we shall see in our midst no more, scenes from the battles of '37, the Artillery camp at Regina last year, and other views in connection with the recent campaign, also photographs of Cols. Wily, Straubenzee, the adjutant and chaplain of the M. G. A., and General Middleton, concluding with an excellent colored picture of the Queen. The Artillery band played selections during the evening, and finished, as usual, with the national anthem.

JAN 25/28